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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the factors involved in resource sharing for preparation of national bibliographies and establishment of national bibliographic services. The term "resources" is considered in a range of senses including information, as well as commitment and financial resources to be expended on cooperation. Resources required for the production of national bibliographies, purposes and problems of resource sharing, and benefits of cooperation are considered. Factors conducive to regional cooperation in bibliography are outlined. The concept of a regional bibliographic agency is developed, based on advantages it would offer for overcoming problems faced by national bibliographic agencies. The report suggests organization and operations for regional bibliographic cooperation, and includes a bibliography of 95 relevant readings. (Author/KP)

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RESOURCE SHARING FOR NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC SERVICES

prepared by

S. Massil

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INTRODUCTION

The increase in the number of countries producing current national bibliographies from the 66 listed in "Bibliographic services throughout the world 1965-1969" (8) to the 109 covered by the "Synoptic tables concerning the current national bibliographies, 1975" (86) is remarkable. The development of national bibliographies has been a major feature of the growth of library services around the world and under the NATIS and UNISIST programmes of Unesco this growth should continue. Already, further new national bibliographies have entered the lists, notably in Ecuador (28) and the specific impetus of the UBC programme and the ISDS network will increase the number of national bibliographies and assist the consolidation and improvement of their services.

The prerequisites of national bibliographies, the establishment of national libraries and the effective linking of legal deposit arrangements together with the establishment and application of standards for data and production of national bibliographies and the training of staff are dealt with elsewhere. The planning of information systems must build primarily on these things but just as it is clear that countries without national bibliographies have to be encouraged to set them up so under the impact of the UBC programme and its analyses it becomes apparent that the achievements and coverage of existing national bibliographies are not all to the same level. In particular, there are contrasts amongst national bibliographies as to the materials they deliberately exclude as well as contrasts in the extent of the coverage they attempt to achieve in both the traditional area of monographic items and in the more fugitive areas of serials control, coverage of government publications, reports, ephemera, theses, music, maps and so on. The growth in the output of "other" library materials in the various forms of "non-book materials" is something that national bibliographies have not yet successfully mastered (65).

Comprehensive listing is one of the main aims of national bibliography which as Kenny says (41): "is a difficult ideal and one which no country is likely to achieve fully". Measures therefore to assist new national bibliographies comprehensively can also be applied to the long established national bibliographies in their efforts to cope with less tractable material.

The "Comparative survey of existing national bibliographies" (62) that accompanies the "Synoptic Tables" shows "the countries with which the International Office for UBC and the IFLA will have to co-operate in future" so as to extend the concept of bibliographical control and to establish agencies for its attainment. The components of existing national bibliographies can also be seen from the "Tables" and it is salutary to consider that while the responsibility for producing the national bibliography is usually vested in national and state libraries, in many cases it is either shared by these and other organizations or it devolves entirely on independent institutions. In some notable instances, the necessary bibliographical work is undertaken by the agencies of other countries and this fact may be useful in launching new projects for bibliographical control in areas and ways hitherto not covered. As Tell asserts (87): "Few countries can afford to maintain a high degree of self-sufficiency in the bibliographic field". Self-sufficiency in itself is not desirable. Kenny again observes (41): "It is particularly true for Australia that a purely 'National' approach to national bibliography can no longer be afforded" and it has been stated (7) for at least one area of the world, Oceania, that regional bibliography should precede national bibliography. It is likely, however, that "most of the institutions working to realize the aim of UBC will be national and state libraries with a function similar to that of a state library, independent bibliographic institutes, government agencies, associations of libraries, booksellers' institutions and associations (62, p. 14).

To identify these bodies in each country and area will be part of the process of planning for UBC. The stimulus to their co-operation should be some sort of resource sharing.

To adhere narrowly to the calls of UBC leaves us short of much development of bibliography on a regional scale although the procedures for national bibliography established in many countries can serve as useful models for their implementation in others as well as for their implementation on a regional basis.

Strategies under discussion or recently embarked upon in Australia (19), Britain (14), Canada (25), France (52), Sweden (71), the COMECON countries (77) and the United States of America (56) can all furnish guidance for planning the necessary regional co-operation. The chief questions cover:

(1) identification of organizations to participate;
(2) methods of communication between them;
(3) the services and facilities that the organizations have to offer;
(4) the location of a focus for the co-operative activity;
(5) the files and data to be stored and disseminated;
(6) the requirements of the users of the files to meet their own obligations;
(7) involvement of governments in the enhancement of national information resources.

Examples of co-operation in the field of information exchange in its widest sense can also serve as models for the more specific demands of UBC and the ways of sharing resources to improve the production of national bibliographies. There are direct parallels with the ISDS network being set up under the UNISIST programme which is concerned with both national and regional centres of input and interchange of data. The proposals of the "Spines" network and the workings of the clearinghouses for scientific and technical information in many countries and regions, the AGRIS and DEVSIS international programmes, can all serve as examples for strictly bibliographic networks and resource sharing.

RESOURCE SHARING

The national bibliography constitutes an organization of the body of current publications of a country. Its purpose is the control of such information to serve as a tool for satisfying user needs. It serves as a cataloguing resource for the libraries of the country, a basis of union catalogues for signalling the availability of materials and the interlending of them; it is the starting point of subject coverage, indexing and authoritative bibliographic information. Efficient systems for production of current national bibliography can pave the way for retrospective national bibliography and the wider concept of national bibliography - the recording of all publications and materials of relevance to a country published in the rest of the world.

The resources required for the production of national bibliographies are:

(1) a national conviction of its necessity through which funds are channelled for its realization;
(2) a basis of legislation to ensure coverage;
(3) a basis of standards to focus national efforts and meet national requirements and international exchange;
(4) trained manpower and expertise;
(5) a body of knowledge and techniques;
(6) technology for printing the national bibliography if not for storing and communicating it as well;

(7) organizational procedures for harnessing the sources of information and the agencies capable of handling it;
(8) a commitment to the community of users, both nationally and locally, on a regional basis and internationally.

The information included in the national bibliography is only the specific "resource" a national bibliographic agency has to contribute to the UBC programme.

Different countries are at different stages of development as regards the identification and commitment of their resources to the production of national bibliography. Most, as has been seen, have only recently embarked upon the implementation of any programme of national bibliography. The aims of the UBC programme must be to galvanize these resources, to channel them as purposefully as possible and to encourage co-operation in a coherent pattern. A further underlying resource should be identified denoting a readiness to adopt and adapt what has been devised and successfully operated for the larger information output of other countries.

It is clear that national bibliography is a prime activity of the national bibliographic agency and the overriding concern of UBC is to improve the flow of information of a bibliographic nature. It can endeavour to do this through the strengthening of the national agencies and in recommending the lines of application of their resources. Alongside the encouragement to adopt and adapt successful operations of other countries there should be a readiness to share resources so as to perform the activity of national bibliography in common with other agencies and in a common programme.

The purpose of such resource sharing is to strengthen, integrate and sustain the commitments to national bibliography and UBC in the face of the serious problems that bedevil it to a greater or lesser extent in all countries. The pattern of development in different countries and regions is not uniform. Reliance on the sharing of resources should spread the burdens so that countries with the less developed resources can be backed by those that have achieved more sophisticated systems and greater articulation of resources.

Resource sharing is not just an option but a necessity in the face of problems and advances that will outstrip the unprepared and unsupported. It is in fact urgent for these systems and developments in technology for controlling information to be made accessible to libraries. In a paper on co-operation Uba recognized for Nigeria (89):

> "It is, above all, necessary that we begin now to co-operate in order to standardize and streamline our processes. There are too many loose ends in our technical methods which need to be tied up, if we are to take advantage of innovations and developments originating elsewhere. Otherwise, if we continued muddle-headedly with outmoded techniques, we shall ultimately find our system like one marooned in a desert island. As a foretaste of what will surely come, we cannot now order LC catalogue cards except on the machine readable order slips; America's shared cataloguing programme has already bypassed us, because we have not a well-organized book trade and national bibliography. Mechanization will eventually come. When it does, the high cost of computers will, whether we like it or not, force us into co-operating with one another. If our processes are at variance with one another, we shall be facing a period of great difficulty when that time comes."

He recognizes that co-operation needs as a prerequisite "dependable comprehensive bibliography". Extraordinary ways of ensuring that these develomments and technologies are made available however indirectly, must be planned and seen through.

Resource sharing will permit greater participation and apportionment of capabilities. It relies upon a stock of common requirements and aims for meeting the basic commitment, which is the coverage of available publications, and provides expedients and devices for adapting available means to that end which are probably beyond a single national bibliographic agency attempting to work in isolation.

The aims of resource sharing are twofold, to help overcome problems of producing national bibliography, and to enhance the benefits of successful national bibliography.

The problems to be overcome are:

(1) lack of funds;
(2) shortage of trained manpower;
(3) uncertain standards;
(4) difficulties of achieving accurate coverage;
(5) difficulties of achieving timely publication of the national bibliography.

The benefits of successful national bibliography derive primarily on the users' side - speedier access to information and, on a wider scale, more reliable data and improved awareness.

The benefits of co-operation in producing national bibliography however, the advantages of the sharing of resources accrue first of all to the national bibliographic agency itself and to its clientèle by the improved ways in which it can meet their demands. These benefits are:

(1) economies of scale;
(2) wider training for staff;
(3) assured standards of information;
(4) access to new techniques of information and more advanced methods of storage and dissemination;
(5) dynamic interaction in a network for the exchange of information both in input and by access to the data input by others;
(6) release of specific capacity, staff or other resources to concentrate on local input.

There are implications of resource-sharing that need further discussion, investigation and clarification for they will have a bearing on countries and the commitment to it and to UBC perhaps, in itself. These implications are political in specific and general senses. Specific proposals for resource sharing such as regional bibliographic centres may involve countries in co-operation that seems unreasonable to them despite the fittingness of other criteria. Whereas some countries still rely on outside services for the production of their national bibliography, as they move towards independence however, they may wish to take this function over themselves and could resent having it displaced by its assumption by a regional centre. Having recently set up a national library by legislation, and having empowered a national bibliographic agency to perform the appropriate duties, countries may baulk at contributing funds to a regional centre established in another country. On the other side, the Library of Congress shared cataloguing agencies seem reluctant to accept data from new national bibliographic agencies, however good their credentials. (There is some evidence that the existence of an LC shared cataloguing agency has retarded national bibliographic activities in East Africa(5).) Area studies groups, such as SEALG, in Europe and America have been slow to support necessary bibliographic activity in the countries and regions they purport to be interested in, instead concentrating on their own acquisitions drives despite local inadequacies. Finally, in a more general way, it should be

noted that some countries have voiced concern at the pressures being put upon them by UBC and by the inviting opportunities to use computers before they feel national development warrants. Wijasuriya (94) in a paper presented at the IFLA Conference in Washington 1974 expressed a firm wish to deal with other priorities at the National Library of Malaysia before attempting participation in such comprehensive schemes. Planning of UBC can seek to dispel apprehensions and a clear enunciation of the operations and of the benefits of reliance on a regional centre based in another country and perhaps a computerized one should serve to reassure such fears. It is clear that they are heartfelt and have a root in national amour-propre.

SCALE OF RESOURCE SHARING

The present trend of national bibliography inherent in the NATIS programme is aimed at the setting up of national bibliographic agencies usually within the national library in each country. The pattern of development of these agencies depends upon local factors, in terms both of pre-existing arrangements and the level of library development, and of current endeavours in marshalling resources. Resource sharing is already practised in varying degrees in different countries themselves in the way the national bibliographic process is operated, or intended to operate, and between groups of countries. There are proposals afoot and programmes of development being implemented. How resources are to be harnessed and co-operation encouraged depends certainly on local factors and stimuli in one area may be absent in another. Factors conducive to it may be lacking or unrealized.

Conscientious approaches to resource-sharing can take various forms starting with the establishment of standards and co-operation in training, the setting up of consultative and decision-making committees with executive secretariats properly funded. Going on to shared, non-duplicating input of bibliographic data and the production of regional bibliography from a focal agency will involve advanced techniques for maintaining data bases and telecommunications for exploiting them.

The impetus to enhanced national bibliography can arise out of the firm commitment to national information systems. In these, the national bibliographic agency is a major component. The commitment to regional co-operation can be fostered in the light of external factors. Such factors can be very quickly adduced as a pragmatic framework for broad co-operation in which national and regional bibliography plays a crucial rôle.

The factors conducive to regional co-operation in bibliography (as in other spheres of co-operation in development in librarianship and outside) seem to be plain for in many more or less informal ways co-operative approaches are being undertaken. Some cases show that practical arrangements have arisen because of them. Parker (60), extrapolating in turn from a study by Cobb and Elder (20), identifies the factors in terms of geography, characteristics such as language and social character, and experiences of past interaction and collaboration in the context of colonialism. He discusses them sensitively but tending to regard them as less important than factors of socio-economic development and proclivities for interaction between countries according to levels of bureaucratic capacity and to homogeneity of development in social, industrial and economic terms. Upon the coincidence of these factors will successful co-operation depend so that not too much stress should be placed upon the former in areas where actual co-operative ventures have not even been adumbrated.

The geographic aspect finds examples in bibliography in the Caribbean (50), Latin America (34), West Africa and East Africa, South East Asia (22), Scandinavia (71) and the Maghreb (51) amongst others where groups of adjacent countries are involved together.

The question of language is more clear-cut and interaction between Arabic bibliographies (53) for instance, or the possibility of it in Francophone African bibliographies have been pursued. The development of "Books in English" between the Library of Congress and the British Library and the extension of the MARC record services in Australia (19) and Canada (54), is of course the most successful co-operative venture in current bibliography on an international scale in the world today. It is sustained by the congruence of the other factors in Parker's analysis, those arising from the advanced industrial and bureaucratic development in the countries concerned.

The third area of interaction which might be termed the "political" is exemplified in the prospect of co-operation between bibliographic centres in Commonwealth countries where it might also be expected that the United Kingdom would continue to take a rôle. Parker, however, suggests that co-operation between states formerly ruled by the same colonial power will not be realized where other factors do not have the greater weight. Bibliographic co-operation amongst COMECON countries obviously has greater potential because of both political and developmental factors, just as in West Africa the former colonies using English or French might be inclined to embark on co-operative activities in their respective spheres. In fact, it is where a combination of factors occur that the bases of interaction are most likely to engender practical developments. It is the strength and profusion of common cultural bonds that will tell. The size of some countries, characteristics such as bilingualism and disparity of local development will give national development the character of regional resource sharing. Such places as Canada, Indonesia (63) and Nigeria in their problems and approaches can also serve as models for regional groupings.

The impetus to common bibliographic developments will also be helped by whatever existing library co-operation there is across national boundaries in all aspects - regional associations of library associations such as CONSAL (22) or other groupings such as ACURIL (3) and the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African libraries; committees of university librarians (74) (who in Africa especially have sustained national bibliography over the years prior to the instauration of national libraries or national bibliographic centres); information networks such as AGRIS; work on projects such as SARBICA (72). Countries covered by LC shared cataloguing agencies are in a different position but a more integrated and supportive rôle could be fostered for these as for the BNB which has not recently been particularly active according to Johnson (39) in promoting bibliography in the Commonwealth.

Parker summarizes the implications (60, page 6):

> "... It would appear, first of all, that regional co-operative schemes based on small groups of countries in close proximity - and preferably, with common boundaries - have greater prospects of success than more widely diffused schemes; secondly, that, whilst differences in language may be important, other cultural factors, like historical and political factors are not; and thirdly, that countries with similar levels of social welfare provision, socio-economic development and administrative capacity will be more likely to interact effectively, the degree of interaction being greater the higher the level. Homogeneity is, however, less important than level in relation to administrative capacity."

He also discusses a prescriptive typology of library co-operation based upon a paper by Sinclair (80) who writes out of the realm of United States academic "consortia" and co-operative networks (60, page 8):

"... For the purposes of studying the problems and possibilities of international regional library co-operation, then, we may modify Sinclair's typology to produce three basic models; Type I, the reciprocal model, in which participants agree to exchange material or data, or perform certain functions, on a reciprocal basis in accordance with some mutually agreed plan; Type II, the national/regional or reciprocal/communal model, in which all participants use the services of one of them, in return for an agreed contribution of some form, to produce required outputs on a collective or an individual basis, or both; and Type III, the regional centre or communal model, in which all participants agree to contribute in some form to the establishment and operation of a central regional organization or institution to produce required outputs on a collective or an individual basis, or both."

It will certainly be sensible to review these models in the light of existing groupings as well as Parker's observations on any accompanying factors that work against co-operation despite the apparent steps towards it. The example of the failure of the Bibliografia de Centroamérica y del Caribe, Argentina y Venezuela for instance is discussed by Zimmerman (95, page 17):

"... The episode of the Bibliografia de Centroamérica y del Caribe was important in various ways. It did demonstrate that under certain favourable circumstances, including volunteer labour and a publishing subsidy, it was possible to produce a well-organized and at least partial listing of the publications of several countries on a co-operative basis. As a classified bibliography, emphasis was on subject rather than country. Even so, in the Bibliografia de Centroamérica y del Caribe, the overall approach was regional. Whether the addition of Venezuela and, more particularly, Argentina was wise or represented over-expansion is an open question.

In any case, the experience illustrates difficulties inherent in such projects, for example: (1) the lack of effective laws of legal deposit made it difficult in some cases for individuals or groups to secure the essential information; (2) contributions were primarily dependent upon the professional and patriotic motivation of the national representatives; (3) a lack of bibliographic skills on the part of any contributor or his failure to comply with the formulae adopted resulted in heavy demands upon the technical director and any assistance available to him; (4) such a project required a financial subsidy for publication costs, even when the bibliography was compiled through services for which at best only token payment was to be expected; (5) there are possible hazards in attempting to expand an operating project farther and faster than financial and personnel resources may warrant."

Caution about factors of national pride have been referred to; there are also the reluctance to change and uncertainty about more advanced technologies, and there is a risk of divided loyalties in a co-operation whereby institutions, each established to perform a special task, may subordinate work on the general plan of interaction while fulfilling their original local function in isolation. To be stressed are the range of benefits that co-operation can bring, the need for change and upgrading of local systems by a co-operative endeavour.

AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

Before singling out the idea of regional bibliographic centres, several other areas of co-operation in resource sharing should be mentioned. These can be seen as steps to take before total co-operation is embarked upon and may rely upon aid from external sources as well as reciprocal expenditure of local resources. Training schemes for staff of national bibliographic agencies are an obvious example, taking several forms:

1. regional courses in particular areas such as have already been started in South East Asia (91);

2. fellowships for staff to gain experience in countries with developed national bibliographies;

3. exchange of staff between national bibliographic centres where benefit might be mutual.

A second area relates to the extension of existing schemes of co-operation, in particular those at the level of interregional committees already mentioned. It is important that for these to be really effective the establishment of a self-supported secretariat is necessary. Experience on this basis will give an impetus to co-operation in the crucial area of actually producing co-operative bibliography. Such committees as SCODLA (75), SCAUL (74) and ICFES (35) have in their different ways purposeful interest in bibliography that needs bringing out; such programmes as those of SAMELA (70) and of the OAS Library Development Office encourage both development of common solutions to problems of CIP, national bibliography and centralized cataloguing, and the development of pilot centres and the updating of cataloguing tools. Concrete projects like the East African Literature Service (26) should be fostered so as to make a demonstrative impact on policy-makers convincing them of their effectiveness and in turn leading to further schemes of co-operation.

A third area specific to national bibliography is that of standards. There is work for national bibliographic agencies in the promotion of a whole range of bibliographic standards. Some, in book production, require consolidation by national standards institutes and the assumption by the national bibliographic agency of a rôle in the registering of publications, as both agency for ISBN and for the ISDS programme. Other standards to promote in conjunction with library associations are of specific concern, standards relating to rules for cataloguing, implementation of the ISBD, establishment of headings for the country's corporate authors. The UBC initiative in encouraging national bibliographies to review national practices as regards personal names will bear fruit when the revision of AACR 67 is completed. Work of a committee such as SCAC in Malaysia and Singapore (73) is worth imitating in this connexion. The objectives of standardization in Nigeria have been set out by the Cataloguing and Classification Committee of the Nigerian Library Association as follows (55):

"1. teaching and training are facilitated when recognized international standards are used: librarians may take their qualifying courses in any library school and staff may move from library to library with less difficulty in adjustment;

2. union catalogues may be more easily compiled;

3. centralized cataloguing card services may be more easily operated within the country;

4. data from the national bibliographies of other countries may be more easily adjusted to local needs, saving much time and expense;

5. libraries in Nigeria may more easily use cataloguing-in-publication and other services from overseas countries;

6. the publications of Nigeria may be included in international bibliographies such as Books in English. This would increase Nigeria's sales of books overseas as well as other commerce. The outside world might have a better

understanding of Nigeria's problems. Many of these problems might be part of the basis for external research, the results of which may ultimately benefit Nigeria;

7. standardization on international lines is the first step towards the advantages which may be obtained eventually by mechanization and the use of computers;

8. both nationally and internationally, standardization will facilitate the exchange of bibliographic information."

The stimulus of the MARC network, revision of AACR 67 and review of the various ISBD drafts should be an opportunity for every national bibliographic agency in preparing itself for further developments in the UBC programme. Even the most highly developed national bibliographic agencies have before them a task of extending their coverage to "non-book materials" and of securing the requisite national and international agreements for their inclusion. Given the several separate authorities responsible for or attempting to cope with these materials in countries like Britain and the United States of America, there will be scope for resource sharing in the effort to fill out the completeness of their national bibliography.

National libraries in sustaining their new rôle also have a duty in co-ordinating administrative structures for prospective national library systems and for building up communications between clusters of libraries forming the national network, and the other components of the national information network, publishers, etc. This is equally relevant in the states of Latin America, Nigeria and Indonesia as in Australia and Canada where studies for more specific networks have been extensively made (9; 17,25).

These are the basic steps which along with the commitment of funds will permit national bibliographic agencies to enter into co-operative and co-ordinated programmes of development. As Parker (60, page 14) observes: "Effective action at the national level is thus an essential prerequisite of successful co-operation in the field of regional bibliography". He goes on to examine the various possibilities of the three types of regional co-operative quoted above (page 12) in the light of his postulate of successful co-operative activity that "the costs of participation ... must be at least equal to the benefits received":

1. "Type I, the reciprocal model, offers immediate advantages, through the exchange of national bibliographic data between the participants, as a simple, straightforward and relatively inexpensive means of achieving the wider dissemination of information on the publications of the region among its constituent countries. ... Once a country is able to produce an adequate national bibliography in conventional format the exchange of copies of that bibliography for copies of the national bibliographies of other countries in the region would require little extra effort or expense."

2. "The Type II co-operative in this context requires all participants to supply to one of them, probably the wealthiest in terms of library resources or computer facilities, national bibliographic data which the latter then processes to produce, for example, general or specialized regional bibliographies which are then supplied to participants. Such activity might extend to the actual production and publication on behalf of less well-equipped participants of their national bibliographies."

Instead of "complementary" national bibliography this approach is in line with that of the Caribbean Regional Bibliography (29, 50). The net result of the LC

shared cataloguing "Accessions Lists" amounts to the same thing but of course is at present co-ordinated for a different purpose. The factors that have given rise to the production of de facto national bibliography for a country like Indonesia (63) hitherto by outside bodies can also be seen in this light. To sustain the assumption of national autonomy in this field the new National Bibliographic Centre in Indonesia will have to co-operate as much with the United States, Dutch and Australian agencies concerned as with any regional co-operation within ASEAN or CONSAL.

3. "The Type III communal model, involving the establishment, by all participants, of a separate regional centre to produce a variety of bibliographical output may seem particularly attractive as a means of introducing a computer-based system in a situation where adequate computer facilities at the national level do not already exist in the region. It must be recognized, however, that such a model is inherently more expensive than the Type II model, since its total costs must be shared more or less equally by all participants, whereas a substantial proportion of the costs of the Type II model are borne by the host country for its own needs. ...The establishment of such regional centres normally calls for formal intergovernmental agreement, which may be difficult to achieve if there is little or no background of previous informal co-operation in the region."

The proposals for the Regional Centre for ISDS at the National Library in Bangkok (45) exemplify this approach which might be extended for regional bibliography as a whole. It is the model through which the extension of the international MARC network will be best realized. The parallel development of the use of MARC records and the development of regional bibliography can be envisaged in this open-ended form of interaction.

Parker's summary is also worth quoting at this juncture before going on to discuss the regional bibliographic agency in more detail:

"To summarize the co-operative possibilities in the field of regional bibliographical services, it seems that the Type I reciprocal model is likely to be the simplest and least expensive to operate in a situation where computer facilities are not generally available and all participants are more or less equally able to contribute to and benefit from a co-operative based on conventional bibliographic formats. Type III also seems suited to the needs of a group of roughly equal participants, particularly if based on computer systems, but it is likely to be more expensive than either Type I or Type II, the latter being most suitable in the situation where one participant is significantly better off than the others." (60, page 15)

REGIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC AGENCIES

The concept of a regional bibliographic agency is worth developing in several directions. It seems right to set out the advantages they offer for overcoming some of the problems faced by would-be national bibliographic agencies. These advantages can be considered in terms of economies of scale, of deployment of the resources of finance and of personnel, and of general development of library potential and services.

1. Where mechanisms for receiving materials are ineffective and identification and acquisition is the major task of the designated bibliographic agency, the production of a current national bibliography is severely hampered. The separation of the tasks of acquisition of material and dissemination of information for a bibliography can be to the advantage of both functions. The number of publications registered by most national bibliographies is small and the size of editions is usually very limited. One of the desiderata for national bibliography is timeliness but it is plainly not economic for a national bibliographic agency to produce immediate weekly or monthly listings of a very small intake. A regional agency with the responsibility for up-to-date bibliographic control should be able to serve a number of national agencies much more economically and with speediness. The national agencies will be concentrating their efforts in acquiring material and in dispatching data to the regional agency for processing.

2. In seeking financial support, a regional centre can expect to have more leverage than separate national bibliographies.

3. The scarcity of trained manpower in many library systems can be alleviated by the setting up of a regional agency in two ways. Staff at such a regional centre can cope with the production of a regional bibliography covering the output of several countries. And, a regional centre of this sort can serve as a focus of bibliographic training for librarians in the region.

4. A regional agency embracing a group of countries will serve as a focus for gradual but effective introduction of the tenets of UBC and the countries not able to meet standards all at once on their own will be better placed to do so gradually by contributing data to the agency. In this respect, especially as regards the development of an international MARC network and the use of computerized systems for the realization of UBC, it will be largely through a regional agency that these systems can be implemented. A regional centre will be able to implement advanced technical systems sooner than most individual bibliographic agencies that cannot afford and lack the experience to develop them separately. The work of the regional agency should be envisaged as that of a node in a network embracing all participants in UBC and as a focus within the region to which national bibliographic agencies contribute data and also derive information for other purposes, such as subject bibliographies and other tools of a regional scope as well as matter for national union catalogues.

5. The new technologies available to library systems are computers, micrographics, telecommunications and audio-visual systems. The advanced bibliographic agencies and other systems of information dissemination are already availing themselves of them. It will only be through a regional agency equipped to deploy these technologies that individual countries will be able to keep up with the new scope of information exchange. In the MARC network it is important now for some regional initiative on the use of data to be taken. The contribution of national bibliography to UBC must be matched by national use of the fruits of UBC already tangible in the form of MARC data. It may be that the British, Canadian or Australian MARC record services can serve as resource centres for groups of libraries in Africa, the Caribbean and South East Asia requiring data from external sources. In the interests of steady development this should be investigated pending the planning of regional bibliographic agencies and their implementation.

6. A regional agency is better able to introduce and sustain standards than separate national agencies.

7. The establishment of a regional bibliographic agency could serve as an example for further schemes of co-operation and participation in the region.

The benefits of a commitment to a regional bibliographic centre emerge therefore in relieving national bibliographies of certain pressures on their own limited resources. This can enable them to concentrate on their own specific problems of national coverage and can give them access to a data base of both regional application and of information from elsewhere relevant to the needs of the different participants of the national library system itself.

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

Given the commitment of different countries to the setting up of a regional bibliographic centre such a centre should be established in one of them under a separate directorate. Each participating country should designate a national agency to act as the focus of the regional centre locally. The national agency should of course be the one which already has a major, general responsibility for national bibliography in each country. Representatives of the national agencies should serve as an advisory committee to the regional centre together with technical experts and an executive secretary directly responsible for administering the centre. Adequate staff will be necessary to handle the flow of work at the centre.

The national agencies in each country should supply bibliographic information on a regular basis to the regional centre. A standard worksheet should be adopted in accordance with UBC requirements and those additional to individual national bibliographies. If ISBNs are available nationally these should be included, otherwise the regional centre should act as a regional ISBN agency too. The regional centre should be responsible for the production of a prompt regional bibliography and cumulating national bibliographies. The centre should also be responsible for the development of computerized systems to handle the input, to merge and update files, and to produce exchange tapes for the international MARC network. In doing so, it should be responsible for maintaining regional data bases of both regional bibliography and MARC records required by national libraries for servicing national requirements - union catalogues, serial lists, subject bibliographies and the like. In co-operation with library schools and the staffs of national and other libraries the centre should conduct in-service training programmes, courses and seminars and serve as a clearing house for information on bibliographic control, standards, problems of languages and publishing in the region. The network envisaged will involve the national agency of each country in the same relationship to local centres drawing bibliographic information from them as appropriate and serving as the switch out to the data resources of the regional centre.

The basis of such a network must be computerized systems at the regional centre (while computers themselves are not feasible in each country) and efficient communications nationally. To serve the cause of national bibliography in this way will foster both further co-operation and opportunities for development in making materials available.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Much recent planning for resource sharing in the United States of America and elsewhere has confined the term "resource" to mean the information stock itself, the bibliographic records to be produced and disseminated co-operatively. In this paper, the term has been taken in a whole range of senses not excluding those of commitment and of plain financial resources to be expended on co-operation for producing the bibliographic records. Sharing of resources to achieve universal bibliographic control has already begun by the very nature of the attempt in each country trying to produce national bibliography. To implement the full scale programme envisaged will take much time and effort; it must be staged gradually but to win full support it must be started soon. Some practical outcome of the various regional seminars on UBC needs to be achieved. However small, an obvious practical step will galvanize efforts to greater commitment.

The following recommendations should stimulate direct action to bring a new level of co-operation to fruition:

(1) the drafting of the various ISBD and the revision of AACR should be taken as the starting point of local and international commitments to UBC;

(2) the developed national bibliographic agencies like those of the United Kingdom, of Canada and Australia should take a positive rôle in extending use of the MARC network to libraries and national bibliographies around the world;

(3) ways of co-ordinating the funds derived both from aid and national resources should be investigated so that schemes of co-operation can be implemented.

The fact that extensive information services are being considered in countries with advanced bibliographic systems in a context of full-scale national library networks is important for the way planning should proceed in countries with less well developed systems. The basis for any development of national and regional library networks rudimentary or advanced must be the stimulation of co-operating libraries by financial incentives from national and international bodies to do things which they are not otherwise financed to do.

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